

LLI Proudly Presents

“Afternoon Tea with Chef Cal”

Wednesday, June 12, 2019

TEA SANDWICHES

*Egg Salad in Mini Cones
Roast Beef, Cheese, & Apple
Classic Cucumber & Dill
Cream Cheese & Red Pepper Jam Hearts
Ham Salad*

SWEETS

*Scones with Clotted Cream and Jam
Springtime Flower Cookies
Lemon Wafer Cookies with Lemon Curd
Martha Washington Cake Slices
Mini Round Carrot Cakes*

Assorted Teas

Welcome to

Afternoon Tea with Chef Cal

In a day and age when we seem to move at far too fast a pace, teatime invites us to slow down and savor some of the best things in life - relationships, food, and tea.

We cherish this long-held tradition, not out of mere sentimentality and nostalgia, but rather because it allows us to reconnect with friends and family in ways that are deeper, more personal, and certainly more memorable than quick electronic exchanges via text message, e-mail, and social networks, as convenient as those may be.

Spending time around the tea table affords us moments to listen and share, not just to hear and talk. We notice the sparkle of youthful eyes while at the same time we can detect and comfort the sorrow in others. We encourage. We comfort. We laugh. But most of all, we celebrate what is the essence of human kind - the importance of relationships.

Tea Sandwich Notes

Egg Salad – in making the egg salad, after hard boiling the eggs and then placing them in a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking, I usually dry them off and return them to the refrigerator for several hours or overnight. When ready to peel, I leave a light stream of cool water running and peel them under the water, which seems to help with the removal of the shell. Now here's the secret, I grate the eggs on a box grater, using the large-hole side. This results in an even distribution of the egg white and egg yolk. Then in a separate bowl, I mix mayonnaise with a little yellow mustard and then add the grated eggs to blend together. Depending on your taste, you can add more mayo to make the mixture smoother. I mix in some finely chopped fresh or dried dill, maybe a little chopped celery leaf and finally some salt and pepper. That's it. Today I just happen to have had those little cones and thought you might enjoy them. They are a commercial product and are not available in the grocery stores. Just remember, egg salad needs to be kept cold prior to serving.

Beef, Cheese and Apple Tea Sandwich – These three ingredients make a delightful little tea sandwich when combined with some mayo and creamed horseradish. First I placed a lite smear of mayo on the bottom bread and then top that with a slice of cheese such as Swiss. Now top the cheese with a very thin slice or two of the apple (I used a Granny Smith), and finally the thinly sliced roast beef. A pinch of salt and pepper next and finally spread the underside of the top slice of bread with the creamed horseradish. Combine the two slices, press down slightly so they adhere, then trim the edges for presentation. Note: when slicing the apples, place the sliced apple into a bowl with water and lemon to prevent browning.

Classic Cucumber and Dill – The secret to making these little gems is to allow the cucumbers to drain prior to using them. Also, it helps if you use an English Cucumber as it has lower moisture content. Slice the cucumber thinly, then place in a colander and allow the slices to drain into a bowl for about 30 to 40 minutes. You can sprinkle a little salt over the cucumber to assist in draining. When ready to assemble, spread both the bottom and top slice of bread with soft, unsalted butter. Line the slices of cucumber on the bottom slice, overlapping slightly to cover the entire slice of bread. Now sprinkle with either freshly chopped dill or dried dill. Place the buttered top piece of bread down, and slightly press so the

sandwich comes together. Trim the edges and slice either in two pieces on the bias or into three small triangle size pieces.

Cream Cheese and Red Pepper Jam Tea Hearts – Using a nice fresh loaf of dark bread, spread the bottom slice with a thin layer of the soft cream cheese. Now spread the top layer with a thin coating of the Red Pepper Jelly and press the two sides together. Using a 3-inch size heart shaped cookie cutter, cut out the heart shape tea sandwich. That’s it. Line the little heart shaped sandwiches on a platter and enjoy.

Ham Salad Tea Sandwich – Using a large cooked slice of ham, found in the meat section of the store, dice it into 1” cubes. Dice one-half a red onion, and some celery, preferably from the finer inside stalks with the leaves. Place all this into the bowl of a food processor and process into a fine chop. Do not over process. You want some texture to the salad. Remove this to a bowl and set aside. In a separate bowl mix 1 cup mayo, 2 Tbsp. yellow mustard and a tablespoon of sour cream. Fold the mayo mixture into the ham mixture. If the ham mixture seems dry, add more mayo. Spread mixture on bread of choice, trim edges and serve.

Tea Sweets

Springtime Flower Cookies – These are a commercial item I found and thought you would enjoy especially since our tea was a Springtime Tea. I bought these cookies from the Wisconsin Cheeseman.

Lemon Wafer Cookies with Lemon Curd – The cookies come from Trader Joe’s. They are a thin lemon wafer. The lemon curd can also be found at Trader Joe’s. To assemble the cookies, lay one cookie bottom side up and spread with a little of the lemon curd. Now place the other cookie, bottom side into the curd and slightly press the two sides together. Arrange on a platter and serve.

Mini Round Carrot Cakes – Using a standard Carrot Cake Mix – prepare as per directions. Now pour the batter into a parchment lined rimmed, half-sheet pan

(13"x18") and bake at 350-degrees for 30 minutes. Allow cake to cool then remove by inverting the sheet pan over a large cutting board. Remove the paper from the bottom and using a 2½ -3 – inch cookie cutter, cut out rounds from the cake. Place the rounds in a parchment lined storage container and refrigerate.

Meanwhile, make the cream cheese frosting. Using an electric mixer, cream together 3 8-oz. blocks soft cream cheese, and 2 sticks soft (room temperature) butter on medium speed for 1-2 minutes or until smooth. Add one tablespoon of vanilla and ½ teaspoon salt and mix till combined. Lower your mixer speed to medium-low and gradually add in the 6 cups of powdered sugar. Once all the sugar is incorporated, increase mixer speed to medium-high and beat to ensure all ingredients are combined. Using a piping bag, pipe frosting over the individual cakes, then cover till ready to serve.

Martha Washington's "Virginia Cake" Slices –

1 stick of butter, softened	1 cup sweet port wine
½ cup sugar	¼ cup brandy
3 cups flour	1½ cups diced dried mixed fruit
2 teaspoons baking powder	6 eggs, separated
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg	1 cup whiskey – Virginia Gentleman is great.
¼ teaspoon mace *	

Cream the butter and sugar until smooth. Mix in the yolks. Mix the flour, baking powder and spices together. Stir the flour mixture into the egg/sugar mixture. Mix in the port wine and the brandy, stir in the dried fruit.

Whip the egg whites until they form very soft peaks. Stir in a quarter of them to lighten the batter. Fold in the remaining egg whites, very gently.

Bake in a preheated 325-degree oven in 2 loaf pans (9x5x3) for 1 hour, or until a toothpick inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean. Cool the cakes in their pans for 60 minutes. Now pour half of the whiskey over each cake. Cover each cake pan with either several layers of cheese cloth or with aluminum foil and allow the cakes to sit for a day, at room temperature, prior to serving.

*You can use ground allspice, cinnamon or nutmeg in place of ground mace.

Tea Scones -

6 oz. butter cubed & chilled
1/3 cup sugar
2½ tablespoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
3 cups all- purpose flour
1 tablespoons orange zest
½ cup dried currents
1 cup buttermilk

Using a Kitchen Aide stand mixer, combine the flour, sugar, butter, baking powder, baking soda, and salt; blend at slow speed using the paddle attachment. Stir in the fruit and orange peel. Add the buttermilk and blend till dough comes away from the side of the bowl. **DO NOT OVER BLEND.** Roll out dough on a floured surface to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thickness and cut into biscuit-size rounds, about 2 inches across. Bake on parchment lined baking sheet in 350-degree oven until golden brown. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve warm with Devonshire cream and preserves. Makes about 16 to 20 scones

Note: You can make the scones and place them, cut out, on a parchment lined baking sheet and freeze, then transfer to a freezer storage bag and store in the freezer. When ready to use, simply remove from freezer, leave at room temperature for about 30 minutes, then bake as above.

THE PERFECT CUP OF TEA

It seems that everyone has their own secret for making the perfect cup of tea, often one that has been handed down through the generations. The question of whether milk should go in first or second is a subject for fiery debate. Some say

adding milk before the tea protects delicate bone china cups from the heat, while others insist that it has a pronounced effect on flavor.

For me, drinking the perfect cup of tea should be an occasion and something to stop and linger over. It should be made in a pot and served in thin china teacups with saucers. The brew itself should be one that you can barely taste – not because of a weakness of flavor, but because a perfect balance has been achieved. There should be no thinness or bitterness, just a perfectly rounded flavor. When you take your first sip, it should provide instant comfort and refreshment, and not a single jarring sensation.

The key to making a good cup of tea is, of course, the quality of the tea leaves, and the water. The water should be freshly drawn and boiled (but never re-boiled) and the pot must be warmed before you add the tea leaves and water in order to maintain the brewing temperature. The choice of tea is up to you, depending on whether you want a fragrant Darjeeling, a scented Earl Grey, a full-bodied Assam, or a smoky Lapsang Souchong. Experiment with different blends and try to choose a tea that will complement the delicacies on offer.

Here are the steps to take for a perfect cup of tea:

1. First, empty the kettle, then fill it with freshly drawn water and bring it almost to a boil. Pour 2-4 inches of water into the teapot then bring the remaining water to a boil.
2. Swirl the water around the pot to warm it thoroughly, then drain and add the tea leaves (usually a teaspoon per person, plus one for the pot).
3. Pour over the freshly boiled water. Stir once or twice with a spoon, then place the lid on the teapot and brew for 3-5 minutes until the perfect color and flavor have been achieved. (Do not try to speed up the process by mashing with a spoon – your patience will be rewarded.)
4. Pour the tea into cups using a tea strainer to catch the leaves. Add milk or a thin slice of lemon, or simply enjoy it black. If you like, you may also add sugar to taste.
5. Sit back and enjoy!